

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejection set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Title

The title is objected to as not being descriptive of the claimed invention. In response, a new title is presented herein for the Examiner's consideration and approval.

Abstract

The Abstract is objected to because of its length. In response, a new Abstract is presented herein for the Examiner's consideration and approval.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(p)(5) for the reasons set forth in the Official Action.

In response, a Submission of Corrected Sheets of the Drawings is being filed concurrently herewith in which reference numeral "16" has been changed to --6-- in Figure 6 and the legend --PRIOR ART-- has been added to Figure 12. No new matter has been added. It is respectfully submitted that the objections to the drawings has been overcome.

Specification

The specification is objected to because of minor informalities noted by the Examiner. The specification has been amended to attend to any informalities, including those kindly identified by the Examiner. In so doing, the specification has been amended to include a discussion of certain steps shown in Figures 10A, 10B, and 17 of the drawings. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Claims Status

Claims 2 through 8, 10 through 12, 14 through 20, 22 through 24, 27 through 29, and 31 through 33 remain pending in the application. Claims 1, 9, 13, 21, 25, 30, and 34 through 37 have been canceled. Claims 2 through 8, 10 through 12, 14 through 20, 22 through 24, 26 through 29, 31, and 32 have been amended to even more succinctly define the invention and/or to improve their form. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added. Claims 2, 10, 14, 22, 27, and 31 are the only independent claims pending in the application.

Claim Objection

It is acknowledged with appreciation that Claims 2, 10, 14, 22, and 27 are merely objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

In response, Claims 2, 10, 14, 22, and 27 have been rewritten in independent form. It is respectfully submitted that the objection has been overcome.

Section 112 Rejection

Claims 17 and 31 through 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

In response, Claims 17, 31, and 32 have been amended to address the grounds of the rejection.

Art Rejection

Claims 1, 3 through 9, 11 through 13, 15 through 21, 23 through 26, 28 through 30, 32, and 34 through 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,564,024 (Asano, et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,600,889 (Hiroki, et al.)

The rationale underlying the rejection is succinctly set forth in the Official Action.

Response to Art Rejection

Without conceding the propriety of the rejection and solely to advance prosecution, Claims 1, 9, 13, 21, and 30 have been canceled. Claims 2, 10, 14, 22, and 31 have been amended *inter alia* to include allowable subject matter. (As above-noted, these claims are now in independent form.) It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is now moot and further comment thereon is not necessary.

Dependent Claims

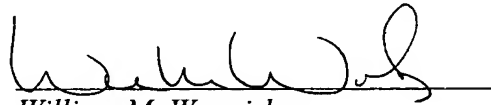
Claims 3 through 8, 11, 12, 15 through 20, 23, 24, 26 through 29, 32, and 33 depend from one of Claims 2, 10, 14, 22, 27, and 31 and are allowable by virtue of their dependency and in their own right for further defining Applicants' invention. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Closing Comments

It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are allowable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application are earnestly solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our New York office at the address shown below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'William M. Wannisky', is written over a horizontal line.

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